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October 21, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

*RE: U.S. Beef Industry, Imports, and America's Food Security*

Dear Mr. President,

On behalf of the United States Cattlemen's Association (USCA) and America's independent cattle producers, we write regarding your recent announcement proposing beef imports from Argentina as a means to address beef prices. We appreciate your administration's commitment to "America First" principles and your clear desire to keep food affordable and high-quality for every American family. However, we urge careful consideration of the real-world impacts such a move would have on U.S. producers, rural communities, and American consumers.

### **Geopolitical Factors Shouldn't Cost American Farmers and Ranchers**

We recognize the global challenges at play in economic policy and international trade. However, U.S. cattlemen—who have weathered decades of adversity—should not be made the sacrifice for larger geopolitical aims. Expanding beef imports from Argentina would risk the very foundation of U.S. cattle production and the heart of rural America. U.S. producers will lose in any deal with Argentina.

### **Economic Ranching Reality: What Drives Beef Prices**

Today's beef prices are not the byproduct of runaway inflation or market manipulation—they are the result of years of industry contraction, a 75-year low in the national cow herd, and steep increases in ranchers' input costs. For the first time in years, cattle producers are finally earning prices that reflect actual costs of production—a long-overdue correction, not an unintended sign of distress.

America's independent ranchers are world leaders in food safety and accountability. U.S. consumers have repeatedly shown they want—and trust—domestic beef, with U.S. beef demand at 40-year highs. What we seek is not protectionism, but a market that rewards those who do



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things right and provides American families a real, honest wage. Calls for lower cattle prices, driven by imports rather than competition, will only undermine the industry at its most fragile point.

For years, low-to-no profit margins, burdensome overregulation, and lack of market transparency have discouraged the next generation, with approximately 107,000 operations going out of business between 2017 to 2022, equating to a loss rate of over 21,000 cattle producers per year. Additionally, according to the 2022 Census of Agriculture, the average age of the U.S. agriculture producer is 58.1 years old. The next generation of US farmers and ranchers is facing a steep economic hurdle when it comes to entering and staying in business. Also reported in the 2022 Census, 79% of ranches had fewer than 50 cows, with a cost of operation per cow at \$2,099; this figure represents many young producers who are facing continued high input costs and low market returns. This financial strain causes many young producers to be forced out of, or unable to enter the industry. This year has seen prices finally reach a level that U.S. cattle producers can justify continuing in their operation and making a livable wage.

In addition, U.S. beef remains one of the safest, highest-quality proteins—and best values—available to American families. Even with recent increases, the time required for an average American to afford a pound of ground beef is unchanged since the 1980s: about 12 minutes of work, a benchmark of affordability few foods can claim. Dollar for dollar, nothing surpasses U.S. beef for nutrition, safety, or consumer trust; today's families can choose quality beef for about the price of a \$5 daily latte. In times of economic downturn, U.S. consumers have proven beef demand is inelastic – it stands the test of time and wallets. In fact, current U.S. beef demand is at a 40-year high, reflecting the enduring place of beef at the center of the American table.

### **Make America Healthy Again: Invest in Nutrient-Rich U.S. Beef**

If we're serious about making America healthier, supporting U.S. beef production is a powerful place to start. American beef is a complete protein packed with essential amino acids, iron, zinc, and B vitamins—nutrients crucial for child development, disease prevention, and longevity. Unlike ultra-processed foods, real beef from American ranches supports healthy muscle growth, sustained energy, and immune resilience. Ensuring affordable access to nutrient-dense, American-raised beef empowers families to make healthier choices and strengthens the nation's health from the ground up.

### **Cheap Imports Don't Mean Cheap Beef for Americans**



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It is critical to understand that cheap imports do not equate to lasting consumer savings. Despite millions of pounds of lower-cost foreign beef entering our supply chain, retail prices have not fallen accordingly. Instead, imported beef is used to suppress the price paid to U.S. producers, while retail prices remain elevated.

Expanding beef imports may seem like a quick fix, but history shows it is not a healthy, transparent, or America First solution:

- The U.S. has already imported 1.26 million metric tons of beef this year, primarily from Australia, Canada, Brazil, Mexico, and New Zealand—making us the world’s largest beef importer despite leading global production.
- Argentina’s exports to the U.S. are up 15% year-to-date, despite their own shrinking herd and rising prices.
- Argentina now imports record volumes of Brazilian beef—over 6,200 tons in the first half of 2025 alone (up from just 146 tons last year), indicating that U.S.-bound “Argentine” beef could actually be Brazilian.

This loophole enables multinational packers to flood the U.S. market with cheaper imported product, sell it at U.S. prices, and increase profit margins—while U.S. ranchers are unfairly cast as “too expensive.”

There are growing concerns that Brazil—a country previously suspended over food safety—could ship beef to Argentina for re-export to the U.S. under an Argentinian label, then taking advantage of a “Product of USA” loophole. Imported beef that is merely sliced, trimmed, or repackaged in the U.S. can receive a domestic label. This practice enables multinational packers—especially the Big 4—to flood the market with cheaper imported product, sell it at U.S. prices, and significantly increase profit margins, all while U.S. beef is unfairly cast as “too expensive.” This model has repeated itself for decades, amplifying the vulnerability of both U.S. producers and families.

A strong U.S. dollar now allows foreign suppliers to land boxed beef at \$3.40–\$3.70 per pound, which, after standard retail markups, can be sold at \$3.80–\$4.25—approximately 30–40% lower than certified, American-raised beef. However, these savings are rarely passed on to consumers and instead benefit only corporate packers and large retailers. Meanwhile, the independent producer is pressured by artificially low prices and lack of clear labeling, and small processors and local butchers are forced out by consolidation.



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## **Unwarranted Animal Health Risks**

It is important to remember that American cattle herd health must not be risked for short-term price relief. Argentina has a history of animal health crises, namely large-scale foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) outbreaks. From 2001-2015, the U.S. banned direct beef imports from Northern Argentina—the nation's main beef producing region—due to lack of confidence in their health and welfare practices. Today, as U.S. producers battle threats like the New World Screwworm, now is not the time to introduce additional risk factors that threaten both American herds and rural livelihoods.

## **Let Markets Work—With Transparency and Integrity**

Efforts to lower prices through artificially increased imports and opaque labeling run against “America First” ideals. What is needed is transparency, market integrity, and fair competition—principles that have always set American beef apart.

Affordability is our shared goal. But sustained affordability comes from domestic supply chains and unmanipulated markets, not new shortcuts. We urge you to use this opportunity to ensure our producers, processors, and consumers have a fair, honest, and strong beef industry for generations to come.

## **Argentina Beef Isn't the Answer**

Argentina's cattle herd is shrinking due to a severe calving shortfall and due to persistent drought, herd depletion, and economic crises. These challenges have forced Argentina to increasingly depend on foreign beef supplies, with imports from Brazil soaring by more than 4,000% in the first half of 2025 compared to the previous year. This dramatic surge underscores Argentina's production instability and growing reliance on outside sources to meet domestic demand. Meanwhile, aggressive export demands from China have pushed Argentine producers to prioritize short-term gains over long-term sustainability.

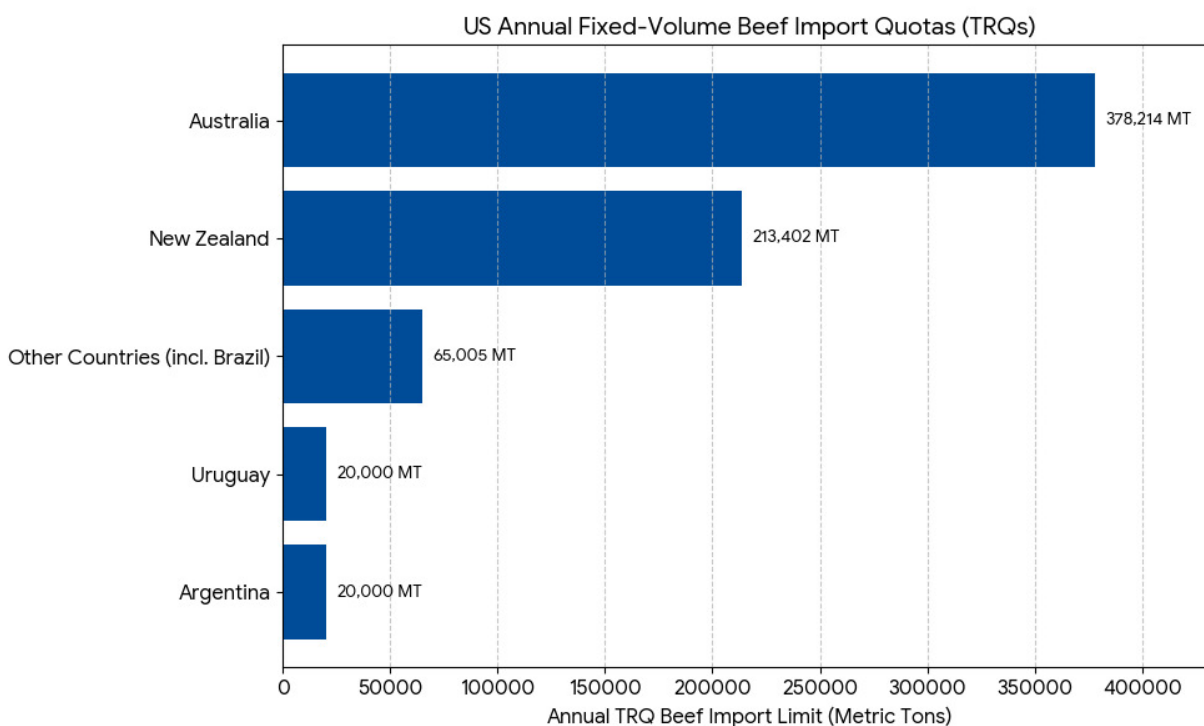
Argentina's beef exports are unreliable and cannot meet American demand:

- In 2021, Argentina's government suspended all beef exports, followed by quotas, taxes, and bans that lasted until mid-2024. This history shows they are not a stable partner.
- Argentina's cattle herd has declined by 5% (2017-2024), to 51 million head.
- Beef exports from Argentina are forecast to fall further in 2025 due to low supply and high domestic prices, with exporters seeing thin profitability and little incentive for long-term partnership.



- As beef prices in Argentina climb nearly 59%, their own per capita consumption is at its second-lowest all-time low. Argentina’s solution? Importing even more Brazilian beef—creating real risk that “Argentine” beef sold in America is Brazilian in origin.

The likelihood that Brazil takes advantage of Argentina’s good relationship with the U.S. is high. Brazil is the second highest beef producing country in the world. Under Tariff Rate Quota (TRQ) requirements set by the U.S. for managing domestic imports, Brazil shares an importer category with many countries, which has a much smaller cap for beef they can import into the U.S. than other high beef-producing countries. The following chart illustrates the scale of the US annual fixed-volume Tariff-Rate Quotas (TRQs) for beef imports, which is the mechanism used to manage imports from most major beef-supplying nations outside of North America.



Using this visual, it can be inferred that Brazil will utilize a beef-buying program set up by the U.S. government with Argentina to dump more inferior beef into Argentina and therefore into the U.S. When this occurs, the U.S. will likely never know, because of Brazil’s bad-actor history and non-transparent trade data. The U.S. is at risk of indirectly subsidizing Brazilian beef, through Argentine imports—a move that would undermine America First goals while rewarding unreliable foreign supply chains.



## Conclusion

The administration's proposal to import beef from Argentina is deeply flawed and will place US producers on the losing end. Relying on a struggling foreign supply chain not only undermines domestic producers but also risks exacerbating global market instability and compromising food sovereignty.

We cannot emphasize enough-- efforts to support consumers must consider the economic realities on the ground and ensure the voices of independent ranchers lead the discussion. USCA stands ready to provide additional data and real rancher perspectives, and to assist the Administration in crafting policies that deliver lasting competitiveness, rebuild consumer trust, and ensure American beef remains on every family's table.

Thank you for your attention and your steadfast commitment to U.S. agriculture, real transparency, and food security.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Justin Tupper". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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CC: The Honorable Brooke L. Rollins  
CC: United States Trade Representative Ambassador Jamieson Greer